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Summary of ***Increased Dangers to Caribbean Marine Ecosystems***

By William H. Allen

Allen’s article focuses on the damage of coral reefs due to cruise ships and other sources. His main argument is that the anchor damage of coral reefs is greater and more serious than the other types of damages. He starts the article discussing an ignorance of captains and their occupants. The tourists are cognizant of the damage while employees of the site are alarmed. The damage could take up to 50 years to restore and recover while the ship is there for 2-4 hours. To show that there is a significant amount of damage applied by anchoring the cruise ships, Allen observed the MV Starward. The damage was likened to that of an “avalanche” causing harm to about the amount of “half of a football field”. Not only was the coral reefs harmed, the amount of fish in the area declined. Since there were no patrolling officers near the anchoring areas, there was not way of warning the oncoming damage.

Without the research, it is hard to tell what damage is done by anchoring or by other sources. Damage to the reefs can be done by fishing and other recreational use, natural disasters such as hurricanes, other tourist development and natural decomposing. Sediment from building hotels or from other digging can cause a stunt in the life of coral reefs. Recently, damage can be credited to cruise ships by the paint left on the reefs.

In order to circumvent the damage by cruise ships and other causes of coral reef damage, there has been an increase in moorings, coral reef education and the insistence of GPS use. Allen, along with others, encourages the ships to anchor in sand or use the moorings provided in order to prevent damage. Although the damage to many coral reefs have been done, educating the uneducated can help save the life span of the coral reef and ultimately, save the cultural environment of the islands.